

MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

April 2, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Place: MDOT Auditorium

Commission Members Present:

MS Department of Corrections

MS Emergency Management Agency

MS Association of Supervisors

MS Department of Environmental Quality

MS Department of Transportation

MS Office of Homeland Security

MS Department of Information Technology Services

MS Department of Health

MS Municipal League

MS Department of Public Safety

Chris Epps

Mike Womack

Steve Gray

Keith Harkins

Willie Huff

Jay Ledbetter

David Litchliter

Mike Lucius

Quincy Mukoro

Stephen Simpson

Advisory Members Present:

House Public Utilities Committee, Chairman

Representative Tyrone Ellis

Chairman Epps called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and welcomed everyone.

Chairman Epps called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting. Mike Lucius made the motion and it was seconded by Mike Womack. The motion passed with none opposed.

Chairman Epps then recognized Brandt Mitchell, Chairman of Louisiana SIEC, to give the Commission an update on the LWIN Project. Pre-Katrina, Louisiana had an 800 MHz Analog system throughout the state (46 sites) which was at full capacity with 9700 users on the system – 90% state agency and 10% local agency participation. The prohibitive factor for locals to come on board was the \$200 per radio maintenance fee. In 2004, the Louisiana State Police initiated LATIE (Louisiana Totally Interoperable Environment). It provided the initial groundwork for the implementation of a statewide digital 700 MHz network.

Post Katrina, the SIEC (Statewide Interoperable Communications System Executive Committee) was created through Executive Orders. In 2008, Senate Bill 788 established 4 full-time positions for statewide interoperability coordination. The UCG (Unified Command Group) serves as a strategic decision making body for emergencies in the State with the Governor serving as the unified commander. The UCG established the Interoperability Subcommittee which is charged with “designing, constructing, and assisting in administering and maintaining a statewide communications interoperability plan for first responders”.

The goal is 112 tower sites and Statewide System Requirements mandate 95% or better radio coverage inside a building within at least the more densely populated metropolitan areas of the state and 95% or better street level coverage in all other areas of the state. Approximately \$63M has been spent to date on infrastructure and \$150M when radios and STR is included. Annual cost is about \$9.4M with \$8.4M of that used for maintenance (support contracts with Motorola and support personnel). LWIN, with 71 sites in full operation, is approaching 40,000 users with over 60% percent of those being at the local level. Maintenance is now picked up at the State level from the General Fund and that has opened the door for more locals to come on board.

The network experiences approximately 3,000 busy voice calls per month which is a 99.999 1st time success rate. Busy voice calls occur when you key up and don't get tone where it allows you to talk. The call goes into queue wait for an open channel. During Gustav and Ike, the network experienced 1.2M calls and busy voice calls spiked to approximately 67 thousand with an average time of only 1.58 seconds per busy. The network was 94% operational during Gustav and Ike and significant issues that occurred during those storms are being addressed.

Chairman Epps recognized Keith Harkins to report for the Procurement Review Committee. Mr. Harkins reported that no requests been received for review and subsequently he had no report.

Willie Huff reported for the Governance/Interoperability Committee and shared that they are continuing with Public Safety Interoperability Communications (PSIC) Grant program evaluations. He also reported that the Pilot Project is continuing in six southern counties of the state with agencies in George and Stone counties reporting ease of operations of the radios and that clarity and coverage is good. The Pilot is now continuing in Greene and Wayne counties.

Chairman Epps recognized Mr. Roach to give the Commission a MSWIN Project Update. Mr. Roach reported that not a lot has changed construction wise since the last meeting. The Southeast area is in Wide Area Trunking and that is where the Pilot Program is taking place. All towers in the central part, Phase 1 are up today, shelters are installed at most sites, electronics loaded at most but microwave is not yet installed. Foundation work has begun on some sites on the west side of the state around Natchez. As Phase 1 is completed, we'll begin Phase 2A building up the west side from Copiah county to West Hinds, Utica, Raymond and into Jackson. This is the primary path to get to Jackson this summer for hurricane season.

Financial perspective: The initial \$17M Grant primarily paid for the SOWS and MSOW and the build-out for the coastal counties; the \$20M Bond approved in 2007 – the first \$10M has been issued and spent, the second \$10M was authorized in March 2009 and hopefully will be sold later this year. The \$19.4M FEMA Grant was released late last week. (Mike Womack noted that \$600K should be able to be pulled down to support administrative activities for MSWIN and is being pursued.) We are in the process of defining the project budget for the second \$20M dollar FEMA Grant. Receipt of the \$35M dollar Bond Bill should carry us most of the way through Phase 2 leaving us approximately \$50M dollars short for the complete project.

Bill Roach also shared proposal results for RFP No. 3584-37977 for the acquisition of build-to-suit radio tower construction services for the Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission. On February 20, 2009, ITS received proposals from four vendors in response to RFP 3584-37977: Crown Castle, Grain Communications, TowerCo, and Towers of Mississippi. Each vendor proposal was reviewed by an evaluation team consisting of staff members from the WCC and ITS.

The staffs of ITS and the WCC jointly recommended the selection of Towers of Mississippi as lowest and best vendor responding to RFP No. 3584-37977. The WCC anticipates the 15-year lifecycle cost, if all sites are leased, to be approximately \$73,765,975.80. Mike Womack made a motion that the WCC enter into contract with Towers of Mississippi as the approved vendor of RFP No. 3584-37977. The motion was seconded by Willie Huff. The motion passed with none opposed.

Mr. Litchliter provided a report on the monthly expenditures. He noted expenditures of \$192,069.59 for the month of March with a balance of \$2,790,716.16. Motorola invoices totaling \$6.5M are currently on hold pending additional funding.

Chairman Epps recognized Mike Murphy of GSRCPIS (Gulf States Regional Center for Public Safety Innovations) who shared some information on possible funding sources. He noted that several billion dollars from the Stimulus Package will be hitting the street soon. Money coming down for interoperability includes \$187M for the COPS Technology Program which will require a

match and the grant guidance for that will be hitting the street in May; BGA has allocated – \$7.1M for local and \$11M for state jurisdictions which can be used for small agencies to buy subscriber units to get on MSWIN. We need to be aware of and apply for those grants that we qualify for.

In addition, Chairman Epps shared that several counties are building jails in the state. This is an opportunity to let the counties know about MSWIN and get them to tie it into their projects so they can come online with MSWIN.

Willie Huff initiated discussion about the scheduling of the WCC meeting in July. It is currently scheduled for Thursday, July 2nd. July 3rd is the designated State Holiday for Independence Day. After consideration, the July meeting will be scheduled on Wednesday, July 8, 2009 at 1:30 PM.

The next meeting will be May 7, 2009, in the MDOT Auditorium at 2:30 PM.

Willie Huff made a motion to adjourn and Vice-Chairman Mike Womack seconded the motion. The motion passed with none opposed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 PM.